

FULL BRANCH DIRECTORY ON PAGE 15

January/February 2012

Mayor Carolyn's Christmas visit

The Mayor of Eastbourne, Cllr Carolyn Heaps found time in her busy pre-Christmas schedule to call in at our Christmas lunch with seasonal greetings for those present, and with supportive words for the work of the branch. Chairman Peter Austin thanked Carolyn for her kindness.



**Could you help
students with
their MS survey? - p5**

**Branch supports call
for better Tysabri
treatment resource: p7**

A Happy New Year to all members and friends

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

JANUARY EVENTS**MONDAY 16th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher, at the Centre 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

TUESDAY 17th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 18th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LUNCHEON CLUB, The Moorings, Seaville Drive, Pevensy Bay.

THURSDAY 19th LADIES GROUP 10.30-1.30 . Call my Bluff, coffee and chat.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

FRIDAY 20th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.

Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MONDAY 23rd CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher, at the Centre 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

MEET TO SHARE GROUP lunch, Royal Golf Club, 12.30pm

TUESDAY 24th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 25th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LUNCHEON CLUB. Selection from Chapters.

THURSDAY 26th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LADIES GROUP - 10.30-1.30. Auction time. Bring along those unwanted Christmas presents, or any items that are as good as new, and help raise funds.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

FRIDAY 27th CENTRE OPEN 10.30-3.30.

Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MONDAY 30th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher, at the Centre 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

TUESDAY 31st CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**FEBRUARY EVENTS****WEDNESDAY 1st** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**** WELFARE GROUP MEETING, 11am. ****

LUNCHEON CLUB. Fish and chips.

THURSDAY 2nd CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LADIES GROUP, 10.30-1pm: Just a Minute.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

FRIDAY 3rd CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.

Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MONDAY 6th CENTRE OPEN 10.30-3.30pm.

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher, at the Centre 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

TUESDAY 7th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30**WEDNESDAY 8th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LUNCHEON CLUB. Ploughman's Lunch.

THURSDAY 9th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30

LADIES GROUP 10.30 - 1.30. Beetle Drive.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

FRIDAY 10th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.

Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MONDAY, 13th CENTRE OPEN 10.30-3.30pm.

YOGA CLASS with experienced Yoga teacher, at the Centre 11.00 - 12.00. Everyone welcome to join the group.

TUESDAY 14th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.**WEDNESDAY 15th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30
LUNCHEON CLUB. The Rodmill.**THURSDAY 16th** CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30
LADIES GROUP 10.30 - 1.30.

SEAFORD YOGA CLASS with experienced teacher, St Peter's Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Blatchington. Details from Annifer, 01323 651364.

FRIDAY 17th CENTRE OPEN 10.30 - 3.30.

Craft Group meeting 11am - 1pm. Everyone welcome.

MAINSTREAM is edited and published by the Eastbourne and South Wealden branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The views expressed, unless clearly shown to be those of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, will be those of the author. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material. Permission must be sought for the reproduction of original material. Printed by Weston Print Services 07745 245547

Now for New Year challenges

Happy New Year!

Just as Christmas seems to accelerate toward us at a frightening pace when December arrives, it quickly becomes a distant memory as we move into January.

Nevertheless we have memories of a lively and enjoyable time in the run up to the holiday. There seemed to be parties of one sort or another almost every day at the Centre.

The draw for our big Christmas raffle took place during the Wednesday lunch club on the 14th, and all the prizes have now been delivered to the winners. A list of the lucky people is on page four

Our thanks go to the businesses and individuals who contributed prizes, and to the members who helped acquire prizes. And, of course, to all who sold tickets and bought them. The result is still being totted up, but we hope the raffle has made a contribution of around £1,000 to branch funds. I think this will become a regular seasonal event, and this year we will aim to launch the tickets a little earlier to help them make their way into the wide world outside of the branch.

THE Arndale car raffle should also have brought a great result for us. We have yet to have our sales effort confirmed by the shopping centre, but my hunch is that we did very well for a Monday. I must confess to having been a little pessimistic when we arrived at the Arndale at 9am – it's something of an empty mausoleum at that time of the day, and the gloomy predictions of an austerity Christmas did not help. But the Centre was soon buzzing and our ticket sellers were kept busy.

Our orange MS Society tee shirts may not be to everyone's taste, but they certainly catch the eye, and the army of helpers on duty throughout the day made sure that the shoppers spotted us.

One very useful aspect of the event is that it helps lift awareness of the branch, and we had a number of people affected by MS stopping for a chat.

Sincere thanks to all who played a part on the day.

THE Christmas lunch at the Langham Hotel was again much enjoyed, though numbers were down this year. We were pleased to be joined by our Patron, Nigel, and his wife, Barbara, Dr William Macleod, Debbie Soave, from the hospital physio department, and of course our MS nurse Vicky Lester.

We already have our thinking caps on as to how the event can attract more members in 2012.

The ticket cost may well be a factor at an expensive time of year, and that is one issue we shall be considering. Certainly the Langham looked after us very well, with excellent service from the young staff, and a first class meal – though there could have been more choice for vegetarians. Any thoughts on the subject would be welcome.

IT was, as ever, a pleasure to attend the Carol Service at Upperton Congregational Church on the 14th, conducted by the Minister, the Rev Gerald Munro, who is, of course, our chaplain.

The church's excellent choir - which included the fine bass voice of branch volunteer Dennis Bashford - led the singing splendidly, and we were treated to the usual lavish tea in the hall afterwards.

MANY thanks to all who have responded to our telephone survey of members. We had hoped to complete the exercise by Christmas, but that proved rather too optimistic at a very busy time of year. Your committee will decide this

month whether to press on with the exercise or make use of the considerable number of responses gathered so far. Whatever the decision, we shall ensure that any members not contacted as yet will have the opportunity to give us feedback. It has certainly proved a worthwhile exercise with some valuable and interesting views coming back to us.

WE shall also be working on a fund-raising plan for 2012. This is ever more important as we have heard that we shall not receive renewed funding from the Rotherwick Foundation, which has supported the Day Centre with £10,000 p.a. for the past six years. We could hardly have hoped for more and are extremely grateful to the Foundation for its generous support over the years.

The task of seeking a new funder has begun, but in these difficult times there are many charities pursuing a limited number of pots. Our 'insurance', therefore, is to ensure that we generate adequate income ourselves. Thanks to the hard work of many members, we have made great progress this year and have established the foundation for more success in 2012.

Best wishes

Peter

From the Chair

by
Peter
Austin



Lucky winners in the branch Christmas raffle

Prizewinners in our branch Christmas Raffle, drawn at the Centre on December 14th:

£100 cash: Mrs M.Smith

£50 cash: Mrs D.Whitfield

£100 Brewers' vouchers: Mrs Novis

Four bottles of wine: Mrs Sugdon

£20 Bamboo Garden voucher: P.Dawson

Men's fragrances: A.Pritcher

Two half days household maintenance: Barbara Goss

Half days plumbing or decorating: Mr D.Best

Golf for four at Willingdon Golf Club: Anne Jones

Golf bag travel case: P.Wellings

Dinner for two at the

Chatsworth: Debbie Gearing

Gardening/landscape work: Mr D.Best

Hair products from Ministry of

Hair: A.Warrender

Golf for two at the Royal:

S.Piper

Bottle of whisky: Esther Coller

Cut and blow dry by Michelle:

Ms J.Allston

Family tickets for Eastbourne

Borough FC: J.Little

Acupressure session: C.Le

Bozec

Electric drill: J.Chapman

Large tool box: Jo Edwards

£10 Tesco voucher: Margaret

Davis

Chrome iPod dock: Glen Miller



Peter is handed the cheque by Chief Inspector Dando. On the left is Caroline.

A boost from Police fund

An initiative by our Branch Secretary, Caroline Holdcroft, resulted in a contribution of £300 to our funds.

Caroline, who works at Sussex Police HQ in Lewes, nominated the branch for a donation from the Police Property Act Fund (PPAF). This is made up of monies received by the police from property confiscated by order of the court and then sold.

The cheque was presented to Branch Chairman Peter Austin by Chief Inspector Jane Dando who called in at the Day Centre and was interested to learn of the work of the branch.

Many thanks to the Police for supporting us, and well done Caroline for spotting the opportunity.

Active theme for MS week

The theme for this year's MS Life and MS Week is 'Get Active'.

'Get Active' could mean anything from signing someone up for a 10k run in aid of the Society, writing a letter to your local MP about unreasonable benefits assessments, or simply committing to 'positive thinking'.

For others it could encourage them to get involved in volunteering for the local branch, join a support group or sign up to the Research Network.

MS Week is from 30 April – 6 May and the national Society will be using the period to ask people to pledge their support.

Suggestions for a 'Get Active' event for our branch are invited.

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News from Linda, our Day Services Manager



Firstly I want to start by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. I can't believe we are now in 2012; Christmas seems such a long time ago now. December was a very busy month here at the Centre, with lots of festive activities including fund raising and various lunches and Christmas parties.

Our chocolate tombola held at Langney Shopping Centre on 17th December raised over £200, which was a fantastic amount of money. Well done to everyone who supported this event and to Val, Barbara and Joyce who co-ordinated the day. I understand there were more than 150 items of chocolate available to be won. Thank you again to everyone who donated to this event. As it was so successful we are now looking to hold an Easter tombola!

Our annual Christmas Lunch at the Langham Hotel was well attended, we enjoyed good food, great company and we had some wonderful raffle prizes.

The following week was just as busy with a well attended Ladies group Christmas party, Wednesday luncheon club party and also a Carol Concert.

The Wednesday luncheon club had their Christmas party and this was followed by the Carol Service at the United Reform Church and finished off with a lovely afternoon tea. Our thanks go to all in-

volved with the Carol Service and especially the ladies who provided all the refreshments afterwards on such a cold and wet afternoon.

As I mentioned in last month's Mainstream our Wednesday luncheon club is looking for new ideas, different venues and new members are most welcome. If you would like to come along, please do contact me at the Centre and I can let you know what's happening or where we are off to.

The festivities continued into Christmas week, with the Wednesday luncheon club meeting at Simply Italian in Sovereign Harbour and a small group of us went to the Pantomime on Thursday afternoon. None of these activities would be possible without the support of our volunteers, drivers and escorts. We thank you all so much for your time, it is very much appreciated.

Finally if anyone has some spare time we are looking for volunteers here at the Centre to help with the Ladies group on Thursday mornings, and Friday afternoons. Please do contact me if you would be interested in volunteering for a couple of hours.

That's all folks.

Linda

Survey participants wanted by students

A number of branch members participated in December in a survey being carried out by physiotherapy students from Brighton University who are studying the effects of physiotherapy by looking at fatigue and quality of life in people with MS who are currently not receiving any physiotherapy. They will then compare these scores to a group of people with MS who have received six sessions of physiotherapy.

The involvement of branch members who have helped so far has been valuable, but the students have appealed for more to take part. But rather than committing time at the Centre, your participation would now involve completing two questionnaires which can be picked up at the Centre or sent to you by post or e-mail. You will be asked to complete the same two questionnaires in eight weeks time. You will not

be required to take part in any exercise or physiotherapy. If you have taken part in physiotherapy in the last four weeks you will not be able to take part.

This study will add to the research of the effectiveness of physiotherapy in people with Multiple Sclerosis, and may assist with planning of physiotherapy services in the future.

If you would like more information please contact the students involved:

Nick Herlihy: nmh115@uni.brighton.ac.uk

Tel: 07835118645

Kim White: kw122@uni.brighton.ac.uk

Tel: 07557472914

Or you can call in at the Centre to collect a survey form, or give Linda a call on 439447 and ask her to send you one.

News from Branch Groups

Ladies Support Group

I hope that you all had a fun and restful Christmas time. I certainly did. Our programme through December up to Christmas, was excellent. We had some serious fun with our Christmas bingo, and our Christmas party.

I must say a huge thank you on behalf of the branch, to the members of our group who turned out on 17th December for a very successful fund raising chocolate tombola in Langney. More than £200 was raised, as well as that all important public awareness. And, of course, not forgetting a big thank you to everyone who brought in chocolate beforehand to support them.

We have now put together a programme to take us through to the end of March, as follows :-

Thursday 19th January: Call my bluff. A marvellous game organised for us by Margaret Clare.

Thursday 26th January: Auction. Bring along your unwanted Christmas presents, or any items that are good as new, to help us raise more funds.

Thursday 2nd February: Come and play "Just a Minute".

Thursday 9th February: Beetle Drive.

Thursday 16th February: Hen Party for our very own Barbara. Yes, she is getting married.

Thursday 23rd February: Meal out together at The Moorings, Pevensey.

Thursday 1st March: Just meet up for a cuppa and a chat.

Thursday 8th March: Music quiz with our ever popular quizmaster, Steve.

Thursday 15th March: Bingo and Easter raffle.

Thursday 22nd March: Body Shop. Another chance to pamper yourself in time for Easter.

Thursday 29th March: Day trip to Paradise Park.

Details nearer the time.

As always, all ladies welcome, every Thursday 10.30 - 1.30pm, and if there is nothing on the programme that interests you, we will as ever, still be at the Centre for an unmissable cuppa and some stimulating company.

Janet

Meet to Share Group

Firstly, I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Christmas seems an age away, but I hope you all had an enjoyable time over the festive season.

The next lunch for the Group will be at the Royal Golf Club, Paradise Drive on Monday, January 23rd at 12.30pm.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Sue

Yum! Val's tasty way of helping branch funds



Val Liles is an authority when it comes to organising tombolas at the Langney Shopping Centre, and, helped by other members, has raised hundreds of pounds for the branch in recent years.

A week before Christmas, Val, Barbara and Joyce tried a new style of tombola - with the prizes nothing but chocolate. Not surprisingly, the stall attracted keen interest and the efforts of the team resulted in £203 for branch funds.

Many thanks to Val and Co, and to all who donated choccies to make the venture a success.

LEFT: Val looks after a pair of keen punters.

Finance update

from Branch Treasurer,
Andrew Dixon



The main sources of income for December are detailed below.

- Donations via Standing Order £541
- Donations via National Centre £84.16
- Membership £47.94
- Physio contributions £249
- Yoga classes contributions £68
- Collection tins £175
- Langham Xmas Raffle £96.10
- Christmas Fayre £706.98
- Christmas Raffle £488
- In Memorial donation £435

We have also received several personal donations which I have not listed but they will have received a note of thanks from Caroline.

Again thanks to everyone for their kind and much appreciated support.
Best Wishes

Andy

Treatment logjam denies patients access to Tysabri

The branch has allied itself with MS Family Support in calling for increased facilities in the region for MS patients awaiting Tysabri treatment.

Tysabri (natalizumab) is administered to people with highly active relapsing remitting MS and is found to reduce the frequency of relapses by two thirds.

However, it is applied via an intravenous infusion every 28 days, and this must be administered in a clinical setting by a nurse or other health professional.

Kings College Hospital has in the past been an option for patients from this area, but is up to capacity and unable to start any new treatments. The Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust established a facility with designated nurses at Haywards Heath but this is also now at capacity and taking no new patients.

Therefore people recommended for Tysabri in the area have no facility available to them and are effectively denied the treatment.

Neurologist Dr Rashid, who is based in Brighton, is understood to have submitted proposals for increasing the capacity at Haywards Heath, but no action has resulted as yet.

The branch and MS Family Support have liaised over the issue, and a letter has been sent to the chief executive of the B&SU Hospitals Trust by Bernard Curtis of MSFS. Branch chairman Peter Austin has written separately endorsing the points made in Bernard's letter.

We are also informing neighbouring MS Society branches in the area of the initiative and advising Allan Matthews, regional support officer.

Anyone who is waiting for Tysabri treatment is urged to add their voice by writing to Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE.

Contact with NHS reform pathfinders

Changes to the way the NHS is run locally were the subject of presentations at the annual general meeting of 3VA.

The branch is a member of the organisation, which supports the voluntary sector with training and advice, and was represented at the meeting by Chairman Peter Austin.

Among those who spoke was Dr Martin Writer who is Chairman of the Coastal Commissioning Group, the consortium of GPs which will commission services for patients in the Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford areas.

There is great emphasis on grassroots participation in the future running of the NHS,

and after the meeting Peter wrote to Dr Writer introducing the branch and offering our involvement in matters affecting those affected by MS.

An encouraging acknowledgement was received from Dr Writer, and a further letter from Amanda Sayer who is leading the Patient and Public Involvement in the Coastal Consortium. She outlined the plans for encouraging PPI which include Patient Groups in each of the 22 surgeries which make up the Consortium and public meetings asking patients and the public for feedback on health services.

Study sheds light on Vitamin D deficiency and MS

A study part-funded by the MS Society has identified that a gene that causes vitamin D deficiency may also cause MS. Researchers at Oxford University found a small group of people with a genetic vitamin D deficiency which has a strong connection to MS.

There is growing evidence of a link between vitamin D and MS. We get vitamin D when our skin is exposed to sunlight and also from some dietary sources. Studies have established that the closer people live to the equator the lower the risk of developing of MS, and sunlight is strongly implicated as a cause.

The researchers looked at people with MS who have a large number of other cases of MS in their family. When the team studied their DNA, all of the people they looked at had an unusual version of a gene called CYP27B1. Importantly gene CYP27B1 controls vitamin D levels in the body.

In a few very rare cases where people have inherited two copies of the unusual version of the gene, these people were found to have a genetic form of rickets caused by vitamin D deficiency as well as having MS. These findings suggest a strong link in these individuals between vitamin D deficiency and the development of MS.

Research may explain why some are at greater risk than others

This research offers further support to a potential role for vitamin D deficiency in MS and may also help to explain why some family's genes put them at a higher risk of developing MS.

However, there is still much to learn about the causes of MS and, if important, the role of vitamin D will only be a part of the puzzle. More work is needed before we fully understand why some people develop the condition and others don't.

This is an important development and shines more light on the potential role of vitamin D deficiency on increasing the risk of developing MS. This research is gathering momentum and will be the subject of discussion at an International Expert meeting in the USA this month, the outcomes of which will shape future research that will give us the answers we so desperately need about the potential risks and benefit of vitamin D supplementation.

The study was published in the journal *Annals of Neurology* and was also supported by funding from The Wellcome Trust.

**MS Week 2012:
April 30- May 6**

Get Active is the message to all

The theme for this year's MS Life and MS Week is 'Get Active'.

'Get Active' could mean anything from signing someone up for a 10k run in aid of the Society, writing a letter to your local MP about unreasonable benefits assessments, or simply committing to 'positive thinking'.

For others it could encourage them to get involved in volunteering for the local branch, join a support group or sign up to the Research Network.

MS Week is from 30 April – 6 May and the national Society will be using the period to ask people to pledge their support.

Suggestions for a 'Get Active' event for our branch are invited.

Because of the Christmas and New Year holiday, Mainstream is later than usual, and comes as a combined January/February edition. The March issue will be with you towards the end of February.

If you have a picture or article that you think would be of interest to Mainstream readers, e-mail Peter at peteroz48@aol.com, or send your contribution to the Day Centre.

Ainsley will be the face of Cake Break

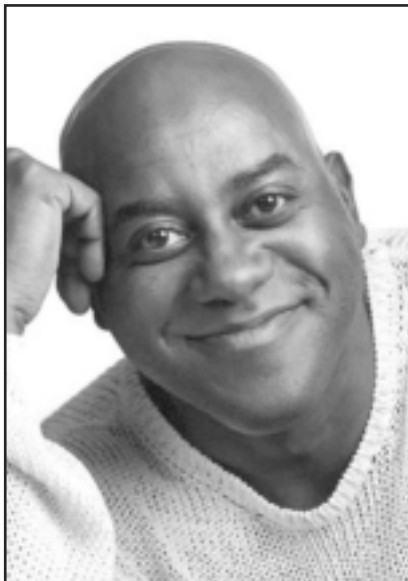
Celebrity chef Ainsley Harriott will be the face of Cake Break this year.

Cake Break launches on Friday 4 May 2012 and the national MS Society is urging branches to get involved, raising the profile of the campaign in local communities.

Eastbourne and South Wealden has a proud track

record with several members opening up their homes and gardens every year.

We aim to repeat the success this year. Staging a Cake Break effectively involves staging a coffee morning - or afternoon tea. You need to be able to produce plenty of cakes, either from your own kitchen or by badgering friends and family.



It's then a case of

inviting as many people that you can cope with and serving them coffee and cakes in return for a donation. Some Cake Breakers even set up a couple of stalls and hold a mini raffle.

It is hoped to stage a Cake Break at the Day Centre this year with the aim of inviting office workers from the St Leonards Road area.

The branch can provide bunting, welcome posters and MS information leaflets if you want to publicise your Cake Break.

MS Life 2012 takes place on 14 – 15 April at Manchester Central. Go to <http://www.mssociety.org.uk/mslife> to reserve your place.

Set to be the biggest event of its kind in Europe, MS Life will host a range of research talks from world leading MS scientists, over 40 workshops covering everything from symptom management to benefits, an exhibition space and a 'lifestyle village' with products, services, complementary therapies and an MS Spa. Fringe events include cookery demonstrations, a

Hilary tunes in to a winner



Hilary Oakshott was the winner of a classy chrome iPod dock, one of the prizes in the raffle at the branch Christmas lunch at the Langham Hotel.

Two docks were kindly donated to the branch by Duncan, the partner of Jenny Manning who helps with our fundraising. Duncan's firm, in Hastings, which deals with such equipment, provided the items - a very generous gesture which was much appreciated. The other was a prize in our big Christmas raffle.

comedy night and a Wheel & Walk fundraiser and there's a free creche for the kids too. The full programme can be viewed on the MS Society's website. The MS Society has set up a grant fund to provide financial assistance up to £150 towards the cost of transport and accommodation for those attending. Priority is given to people on a low income who live a long and grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The branch may also be able to offer financial support. The closing date for applications to the MS Life Fund is 30 March 2012.

Haunted by the never-ending turkey

Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a terrific Christmas and that your stockings were stuffed full of all the goodies that you wanted.

To be honest, I am a bit relieved that Christmas is over. Don't get me wrong, I have a very good time in the festive season. What's not to love about it, lots of chocolate, biscuits, nuts and all other kinds of goodies, Bing Crosby on the radio, pressies around the tree and my family together again.

I don't mean to be a bit of a 'wet blanket' but once the chaos and merriment of the day is over what are we left with? My daughters got up at the crack of dawn on Boxing Day, no before that, in the dark of night, and trekked off to the Next sale. At 6.15am they were number 384 in the queue and when they finally got in they bought the exact same shirts that I had bought their partners for Christmas, but at half the price! As I had gift receipts for the shirts, they kept the sale items, took the originals back and got the full price returned. They are more 'savvy' shoppers than me, that's for sure.

It's not just the big sales rip off that gets to me at Christmas time. Every year I tell myself not to worry too much, and every year I get stressed. I end up buying a turkey big enough to feed the American

Strictly Sue



Army, now that it's been cut. I have sleepless nights about whether I have the same number of presents for both the girls and, on Christmas Eve, I send Andy on a crusade to find brandy butter, NOT cream, before the shops shut.

And then I ate so much on Christmas Day that I couldn't manage any pud and the brandy butter sat ignored and uneaten in the fridge. After turkey sandwiches and cold on Boxing Day, every meal involves some new and exciting way to use up the bird that is never-ending. I eat so much of it at Christmas that I can't face turkey again all year, which is a shame because it is a lean, healthy meat which would be very good for me. I've put on so much weight in a week that I should only eat salad 'til next December anyway!

My Christmas tree started to lose pine needles as it came in the front door and by New Year's Eve it is on its way out of the back door. Despite vigorous Hoovering the carpet will be hiding spikey little reminders of its presence until May.

I am going through a pile of Christmas cards I received. I have found at least three that I didn't send to, so will put them on my list for next Christmas, but they won't send me one, because I didn't post one to them last year. That's how it's been going for years and will no doubt carry on for a good few more.

If this all seems a bit gloomy and 'post Christmas blues' then try to do what I have just done. Buy a bunch of bright yellow daffs for the kitchen. They are reminding me that Spring is just a few weeks away!

See you next month.

Sue Dixon

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From our MS Information monitor, **Ian Westgate**

Exciting MS stem cell discovery

Researchers from the MS Society's Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair have found it may be possible to reverse the ageing process in the central nervous system for people with MS.

The study used animal models to explore remyelination, the process where damaged nerve sheaths are restored. As people with MS age, remyelination decreases significantly, resulting in more nerve fibres being permanently lost.

By exposing older adult mice to cells from young mice, researchers found that this decline in remyelination could be reversed.

Dr Doug Brown, Head of Biomedical Research at the MS Society said: "Professor Franklin and his team have made significant breakthroughs in recent years and this provides more encouraging progress in their tireless effort to develop therapies that might stop or reverse the devastating effects of MS."

MS Society: 06 Jan 2012

Brain Iron Accumulates as MS Develops

A study involving 150 patients has revealed that iron accumulation in the brain has been found in patients with advanced MS but not on patients with single MS like episode, Clinically Isolated Syndrome (CIS).

The study, published in the journal *Neurology*, looked at 78 MS patients, 35 Clinically Isolated Syndrome (CIS) patients and 35 healthy controls who all underwent MRI imaging. These showed increased levels of brain iron in MS patients' basal ganglia compared with CIS patients and healthy controls.

The authors found that the iron levels in MS rose with age, disease duration, disability and declining mental processing speeds.

The absence of increased iron levels in patients

with CIS indicates that iron accumulation does not happen before MS begins. Once iron accumulates within the brain, subsequent oxidative stress-induced tissue damage may enhance the extent of damage to axons and neurodegeneration.

The authors of the study argue that iron accumulation in MS occurs with advancing disease and is related to the extent of brain damage.

Source: Neurology 2011

Confederation of Passenger Transport launches mobility scooter code

The Mobility Scooter Code has been developed jointly by CPT and the Department For Transport and its purpose is to standardise the industry's practice on the carriage of mobility vehicles on schedule bus services in England excluding London.

The code simplifies and puts in place consistent procedures for bus operators to ensure that mobility scooter users are able to use the services easily and safely. The code aims to make clear to all concerned what type of mobility scooter will be allowed to board low floor buses.

Only scooters that meet the operators' criteria will be accepted on buses. Generally speaking scooters with three or four wheels no longer than 1000mm long and 600mm wide and with a turning radius not exceeding 1200mm will be accepted. The weight of the scooter plus occupant must be within the safe working load (SWL) of the ramp fitted to the vehicle. The ramps generally have a safe working limit of 300kg. Also all prospective passengers must obtain approval of operators to cover both design of the scooter and the ability of the user to control and manoeuvre safely.

Once approved customers will be issued with a "scooter permit" for travel, containing scooter details, their name and photograph which they will be required to show to the driver when boarding a vehicle. The standard permit will be accepted on buses able to carry scooters by all companies who have signed up to the Code.

Disabled motoring UK December 2011

New Area Fundraisers will work with branches in lifting profile

To put the MS Society in the best possible position to 'Beat MS' in the current competitive environment, the Society aims to become more visible with the help of new Area Fundraisers who will work with branches and other community fundraisers to increase income from 2012.

Area Fundraisers will work alongside local staff and volunteers to help branches grow their income and promote more widely the Society's fundraising events and activities. The Society has already trialled this role in the West Area of England with great success.

Initially there will be five Area Fundraisers in post in England, two in Scotland and one in Wales and then the Society will look at other areas where help is needed, including Northern Ireland.

Area Fundraisers will not directly organise

fundraising activities for branches but will help branches to:

Assess and plan their fundraising

Recruit, support and develop the skills of fundraising volunteers

Effectively approach local community groups, charitable trusts, employers, schools and encourage joint working on events and applications between branches.

Maximise the use of national fundraising products and activities such as Cake Break, gifts in wills and adrenalin events ie. sky diving.

Area Fundraisers will also work with and support other community fundraisers and groups not directly involved with branches.

These positions are currently being recruited and will be in place early this year.

From our Branch Chaplain, the Rev Dr Gerald Munro

Turning a page for a new year

Dear Friends Some of you will know the C.S.Lewis books about Narnia. The best known is called The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. It tells how four children get into the magic land of Narnia, where they have many adventures. In one of the sequels, Lucy has bravely gone into a magician's room to try to find a spell which will help the poor creatures called Duffers.

The book of magic spells was lying on a reading desk in the middle of the room. Lucy went up to the book and opened it. There was no title page; the spells began straight away, and at first there was nothing very important. There were cures for warts and toothache and cramp: very handy perhaps but hardly what she wanted. The book was so interesting that Lucy could hardly tear herself away. "But I must go on", she told herself. So on she went.

Soon Lucy came to a spell "for the refreshment of the spirit". It was very beautiful, and what she found herself reading was more like a story than a spell. It went on for several pages, and before she had read to the end of the spell she had forgotten that she was reading at all. She was living in the story as if it were real. When she reached the end Lucy said,

"That is the loveliest story I've ever read or ever shall read in the whole of my life. I wish I could have gone on reading it for 10 years. At least I'll read it over again."

But part of the magic of the book came into play. You couldn't turn back. The right hand pages, the ones ahead, could be turned; the left hand pages could not. This is a bit like life itself. There is no turning back on the road of life, although we often wish that we could.

Perhaps, like Lucy, we should like to have something all over again. Perhaps we would like a second chance at something. Looking back, we may think "If only..." If only we could change the past. We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it.

As we begin another year, we look back and give thanks for all the opportunities we have had for making progress, and for all who have helped us on our way.

May the new year open up for us new opportunities to go forward with courage into the future. Happy New Year!

With every good wish

Gerald

Holiday locations for people with MS

West Herts Branch has a holiday lodge at Shorefield Holiday Village, near Lymington, Hampshire, for people with MS, families and carers.

The chalet has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and lounge/kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed.

A brand new mobility scooter is also available to use. Bookings can be made by calling Richard Smith on 07709235729. (Please leave a message if necessary and they will call you back.)

MS Society Northern Ireland has two fully accessible chalets available for hire at the SHARE village in Lisnaskea. The cost is £150 per week and includes a SHARE fitness leisure pass. Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis. To book a holiday please contact Mark on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk.

NICE refuses new pill on grounds of cost-effectiveness

The new pill for people with relapsing-remitting MS, called Gilenya (formerly known as fingolimod), has been refused by NICE for a second time on the grounds of poor cost effectiveness.

Gilenya was licensed by drug regulators the MHRA in April after they deemed the treatment both safe and effective. Since then, the availability of Gilenya has depended on whether local health-care authorities or PCTs are willing to pay for it for their patients.

In August, NICE issued draft guidance stating the treatment was not cost effective and should not be freely available to people on the NHS. A consultation followed, in which the MS Society submitted evidence and the makers of the drug reduced the price, but this announcement shows the decision from NICE remains unchanged.

A further consultation will now take place and people with MS are encouraged to submit their views. This can be found at <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/>

This will be disheartening news for people with MS and it will leave some people with no effective treatment option. The Society would like to see Gilenya freely available to all those that could benefit and remain hopeful that this will happen.

This is not a final decision, so in the upcoming consultation period the Society will again be encouraging people with MS to contact NICE with their views

Does wine help ease MS symptoms?

Wine's ability to ease inflammation may help slow the progression of multiple sclerosis in some cases, according to a study by researchers from neurology and psychology clinics in Belgium. The team found that patients who suffer from relapsing remitting MS and also drank wine had less severe symptoms. But the impact of wine was limited and the reasons for the effects were unclear.

In the Belgian research, to be published in an upcoming issue of the European Journal of Neurology, the team examined potential lifestyle choices that could be associated with MS. They examined 1,431 people with MS and compared their symptoms to habits of consumption.

The researchers found that relapsing remitting MS sufferers who drank wine seemed to enjoy an observable "protective effect." In the study, more than 80 percent of the participants drank up to seven glasses of wine per week. The same also held true for people who drink coffee or eat fish regularly. Cigarette smoking, on the other hand, did not help alleviate symptoms in either type of

MS.

As for possible cause, the study does offer one suggestion—resveratrol, a compound found abundantly in red wine, is known to exhibit anti-inflammatory effects. However, MS is a complicated ailment and the authors warn sufferers not to start drinking wine as a result of their research

NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH MS?

If you are newly diagnosed with MS and feeling a bit low and would like someone to talk to, please pick up the phone and give me a call.

**Sue on 01323 736359, or
SueAustin50@aol.com**

Calls are treated in strict confidence

Report from the last committee meeting

A summary of the branch committee meeting held on 10th December.

Present: Peter Austin, Caroline Holdcroft, Linda Warner, Barbara Day, Margaret Clare Fuhrmann, Nigel Waterson - Patron. Apologies: Andy Dixon, Annifer Hatcher, Sue Austin, Ian Westgate and Janet Forshaw

Matters arising from previous meeting: The new Branch information leaflet has been drafted and a copy was presented for approval. This will now be sent for printing at previously agreed cost.

Financial Update: As Andy was absent, Peter presented the figures that had been prepared.

Income for November was shown at £7,838.02 against outgoings of £4,199.63.

We maintain a strong financial position, although fundraising will need to be kept up to pace expenditure.

December will see the funds from the Christmas Fair, the Christmas Raffle and the Car Raffle, so again income should be ahead of outgoings.

Rotherwick have now confirmed they will not be supporting us next year, although they have invited us to apply again in the future. Peter suggested we liaise with an advisor from 3VA about approaching other Trusts for funding.

Drivers and Insurance Cover: The driver insurance renewal was showing a large increase this year, and this was queried by Linda at Andy's request. It turned out to be a clerical error by the Insurance Company and a partial refund cheque of approx £400 will be sent back to us shortly. This has highlighted to us the importance of checking all invoices received carefully in future.

Christmas Fair round up: The final figures are in and a total of £706.60 was raised at the event.

The breakdown was as follows:- Jenny's Sweets, £13.35; Guess My Name (Anita) £14.50; Tombola (Sue and Joyce) £115.46; Craft (Barbara and Roy) £86.50; Young Carers Lucky Dip (Charlotte) £12.99; Books (Peter) £36.30; Cakes (Sue and Claire) £141.25; Refreshments (Bridget and Clive) £52.80; Sale of Raffle tickets (Peter M) £41.50; Cards and tree decoration's (Val) £ 32.00; Entrance (Barbara) £41.00; Sale of Crafts and Jewellery £118.95.

Next time we could consider a white elephant stall and a bric-a-brac stall as these often do well at events such as these.

Things to consider for next time – signage could have been better, and the hall was a little snug. Also, the time for the event was 12-3pm, but was quiet generally from 1.30 onwards. Maybe a time of 10.30-1.30 or 11-2pm would be better in future.

Peter expressed his thanks to everyone involved for their time and effort.

Christmas Lunch: 54 people were booked in for the lunch and five people have had to drop out. There has been some resistance this year due to the price of the tickets, and maybe a new venue could be explored for next year. It was also discussed whether we should consider subsidizing the cost in future, and this will be an action point to be carried forward for next year.

Christmas Raffle draw: This would take place at the Centre on 14th December. Caroline will write to everyone who supplied a raffle gift with details and a copy of Mainstream for their interest.

Points for future consideration – The request for prizes should be made far sooner than it was this year, and the raffle books should be sent out in Mainstream sooner also.

Fund raising – Draft plan for 2012 : This will be carried forward to next meeting. By then we should have heard about the Bluebell Walk for 2012. Nigel has confirmed that he would be happy to host another Summer Fair, although this will need to be confirmed with Barbara first.

Progress of Telephone Survey : There have been varying degrees of success in this with some still to be completed.

One point raised so far was that some members felt a rail was needed on the stairs at the rear of the Centre into the car park as they often felt unsteady approaching the rear door. This will be explored by Linda with the Landlord.

Funding requests: None received since the last meeting. The 'Drink Up' has arrived in the Centre and needs to be delivered to the member for whom it was requested.

Welfare Report: A training day will be arranged by regional officer Allan Matthews in the New Year for all new Volunteers

Correspondence received and AOB: Caroline will write to Barclays Head Office to thank them for the match funding for the Gala Ball arranged by the local branch.

Ian has provided costs for the ESDA coach should we wish to use it for outside events next year. For a six hour outing with one collection point to Sheffield Park - £205 and to Wakehurst Place - £225. The coach can take 30 people and has removable seats to accommodate an additional three wheelchairs. This is for consideration for next year as we hope to increase days out for members.

Peter has registered our interest with Health Watch, which is replacing Link. He is involved with Bernard Curtis in lobbying re Tysabri being made available at Hurstwood Park for members who would benefit from the treatment as apparently there are no spaces for this treatment available in our area now.

EASTBOURNE & SOUTH WEALDEN MS SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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- FUNDRAISING** Contact the Day Services Manager or Chairman
- MS NATIONAL HELPLINE** 0808 800 8000
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- MS COLLECTION TINS** Ted Scott 01323 500351
- PATRON** Nigel Waterson 07850 377274 nigel@nigelwaterson.com
- MS MINISTER** Rev. Dr Gerald Munro BA MA Dphil 01323 892538 (All religions and none)
- MS AMBULANCE MOBILE** 0752 805 3365 (Mercedes)



- DAY SERVICES MANAGER** Linda Warner 01323 439447 info@mssesw.org.uk
- MS NURSE SPECIALIST** Vicky Lester 01323 514809 Victoria.Lester@nhs.net



Our MS Centre is independently funded and was established in February 2004 and officially opened in June 2005 by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.
Financially supported by: The Rotherwick Foundation



Young Supporters' Christmas outing



On December 30th the Young Supporters group had their Christmas outing. We visited Knockhatch Ski Centre, to try out their new toboggan slope and 'Ringo Run'. We spent the afternoon tobogganing, and then enjoyed a pizza dinner, followed by a delicious chocolate surprise dessert!

Everyone had a great afternoon, even if we did all get soaking wet!

Our next outing will be at Easter, I have already had a few suggestions as to where we could go, but if anyone has any ideas, feel free to get in touch!

I hope you've all had a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Clare Forshaw



'Thank you'
to our
volunteers

The branch held a lunchtime get-together before Christmas to say thank you to our volunteers. Chairman Peter voiced the appreciation of the branch for the hard work and commitment of all who helped, without whom the branch could not function.



A sweet result from Mia's cake raffle

Mia Keegan, of the Langney Barclays Bank, raised a fantastic £200 for our branch by raffling the delightful Christmas cake which she made.

Mia and colleagues sold the tickets from the bank, and we also had buyers at our Christmas Fair.

And the good news is that Barclays Community Fund will match the amount raised - giving us another £200.

Very many thanks, Mia.